

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of mounting a vial in a level providing for increased visibility of the vial, the method comprising:

- providing the level with a recess and a measuring surface;
- positioning the vial in the recess at an angular relationship to the measuring surface; and
- enclosing the vial within the recess with a ring member, the ring member comprising front and rear portions with the vial positioned therebetween, the portions being circular and having beveled edges forming a funnel-shaped surface.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the ring member is a first ring member with first front and rear portions, the method further comprising enclosing the first ring member with a second ring member having front and rear portions, the second portions having a funnel-shaped surface aligned with the funnel-shaped surface of the first portions.

3. (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein the second portions include wing members having apertures therein and wherein the level has openings spaced from the recess, the method further comprising securing the second ring member to the level by passing fasteners through the apertures and the openings.

4. (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein the first and second ring members have contrasting colors to outline the vial.

5. (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein the second ring member is a soft elastomeric providing impact-absorption to the level.

6. (Original) The method of claim 5 wherein the first and second ring members are bonded together before the vial is enclosed in the recess.

7. (Currently Amended) A level having a vial secured thereto, the level comprising:

- a body having a measuring surface and a recess;
- a vial positioned in the recess at an angular relationship to the measuring surface; and
- a ring member enclosing the vial within the recess, the ring member comprising front and rear portions with the vial positioned therebetween, the front and rear portions being circular and having beveled edges forming a funnel-shaped surface.

8. (Currently Amended) The level of claim 7 wherein the ring member is a first ring member with first front and rear ring member portions, the level further comprising a second ring member enclosing the first ring member, the second ring member having front and rear portions, the second portions having a funnel-shaped surface aligned with the funnel-shaped surface of the first portions.

9. (Currently Amended) The level of claim 8 [[7]] wherein the second portions include wing members having apertures therein and wherein the level has openings spaced from the recess, the apertures and openings receiving fasteners to secure the second ring member to the level.

10. (Currently Amended) The level of claim 8 [[7]] wherein the first and second ring members have contrasting colors to outline the vial.

11. (Currently Amended) The level of claim 8 [[7]] wherein the second ring member is a soft elastomeric providing impact-absorption to the level.

12. (Currently Amended) The level of claim 8 [[7]] wherein the first and second ring members are bonded together.

13. (Currently Amended) A level having a vial secured thereto, the level comprising:

- a body having a measuring surface and a recess;
- a vial positioned in the recess at an angular relationship to the measuring surface; and
- a ring member enclosing the vial within the recess, the ring member engaging the vial and the body, the ring member being circular and having a beveled edge forming a funnel-shaped surface, each point along the edge defining a slope line[[s]], each of the slope lines intersecting the vial,

whereby the vial is protected by the level and ring member while visibility of the vial is enhanced. [[.]]

14. (Currently Amended) The level of claim 13 wherein the vial includes a central portion where a bubble rests when the measuring surface vial is at a desired orientation level, each of the slope lines intersecting the central portion.

15. (Original) The level of claim 13 wherein the ring member includes wing members having apertures therein and wherein the level has openings spaced from the recess, the apertures and openings receiving fasteners to secure the ring member to the level.

16. (Original) The level of claim 13 wherein the ring member includes inner and outer layers, the inner and outer layers having contrasting colors to outline the vial.

17. (Original) The level of claim 16 wherein the inner and outer layers are elastomeric and provide impact-absorption to the level.

18. (Original) The level of claim 17 wherein the inner layer is acrylonitrile butadiene styrene and the outer layer is thermoplastic rubber.

19. (Original) The level of claim 17 wherein the outer layer has a lower density than the inner layer.